Table of Contents

1. Chapter One
2. Chapter Two
3. Chapter Three
4. Chapter Four
5. Chapter Five
6. Chapter Six
7. Chapter Seven
8. Chapter Eight
9. Chapter Nine
10. Chapter Ten
11. Chapter Eleven
12. Chapter Twelve
13. Chapter Thirteen
14. Chapter Fourteen
15. Chapter Fifteen
16. The Final Part (Ever...)

Chapter One

[image]

Hello lovelies! It's been about a year since I have first started this book, and I cannot thank you enough for supporting this story. As I am typing this, this story has 4.5k reads. I am so grateful for your support on my first fic, you all truly mean so much to me and I hope you can enjoy some of my other AUs while you're at it. This story was never completed, but I don't think it was meant to be, now, on with the show!
With love, Gaporius
＜3

Squirrelflight opened her eyes in the warriors den, Brambleclaw had decided to sleep away from her last night. They had a fight about Hawkfrost the previous night. She couldn't believe him! That cat was up to no good, and Squirrelflight knew it. She noticed Ashfur's outline from the den. "Hello, Ashfur," Squirrelflight greeted the gray tom. "Greetings, Squirrelflight. I was going to go on a hunting patrol, would you like to come?" Squirrelflight thought about it, "Well, it would be good to sink my claws into something," She told him. "Very well, follow me," the tom led her out of the camp along with Thornclaw, of course, and Brackenfur.

After some time had passed, the patrol split up to find more prey. Squirrelflight carried on with Ashfur. "You know, I think I scent a rabbit somewhere forward from here.." Ashfur commented. So that's where they went. Squirrelflight saw a rabbit hopping along the undergrowth. Instinctively, she crouched down and lightly padded forward, then pounced. She caught it by the neck and nipped it, letting it dangle in her jaws. "That was a great catch!" Ashfur praised. "Thank you," Squirrelflight meowed, her voice muffled by the rabbit's fur. They carried on, catching more prey as the sun grew higher.

When they returned to camp, they found Brambleclaw sitting in the camp, talking with Leafpaw. She overheard things like, "I just don't

understand.. She's always been so nice to me! Why can't she just let me have this? Can't she handle me being Hawfrost's brother?" Squirrelflight's ears flattened. She felt a rush of guilt. Maybe she had been a little harsh.. Suddenly, she heard a voice behind her. "Are you okay, Squirrelflight?" She turned around to see Ashfur. "Oh, yes," She sighed, "I just feel bad for what I said about Hawkfrost last night. Maybe I was just tired..." Ashfur's eyes widened. "Hawkfrost? Isn't he the one who tried to fight with Mistyfoot? Man, you should've seen the look on his face when he found out she was still alive.." Ashfur meowed, his ears perked as if he was able to hear the RiverClan tom's battle cry. Squirrelflight began to feel the guilt less and less. "Yeah, actually. Good point. I'll be sure to tell him that when he brings it up."

Squirrelflight sat down in front of the Warriors' Den, grooming her pelt. When she looked up, she saw a brown tom padding towards her. "Hello, Brambleclaw." She said. The tom fumbled with his paws. "You look like you have fleas in your pelt?" She tried to make light of the situation, maybe he'd come to apologize. "Well.. Squirrelflight.. You see.. It's.." He cleared his throat and sat up. "I don't think you should judge me for who I am. In fact, you shouldn't judge me for who my brother is! Maybe it's just because Tigerstar is our father, and you think his evil deeds passed on to us, but I disagree." Squirrelflight's chest filled with fury. "Oh, so you like that no good, evil doing tom? You know, I can't believe I decided to go on the great journey with you! Do you even realize how he acted when Mistyfoot came back? He wanted to be deputy! He wanted all of the control, he didn't just want what was best of his Clan!" She felt her ears growing hot with fury. "You know, Brambleclaw, I think things just might not work out for us!" She watched as his expression turned to a frown. "Fine, thought your sister might have had good points.. Guess I was wrong," He curtly turned away, head lowered, paws moving across the ground swiftly. She sighed. Leafpaw, her own sister gave him these points? She thought that she'd at least agree with her! She looked as Ashfur padded over, sadness in his gaze. "I overheard the conversation. I'm sorry things aren't working out, but hey, I'm here for you when you need me," He meowed lightly, looking her in the eyes, his blue optics staring into her's. "Thank you, Ashfur. I'll be sure to tell you if anything happens," She meowed to him with a sigh, "I just don't understand

why he can be so difficult sometimes.. He's acting like a kit!" Ashfur sighed, sitting down next to her. "I hope that you can find the light of the situation, and if you can, avoid him. Sometimes it's hard to focus on other things if you are consumed by the dramatic parts in life." Squirrelflight nodded. "You're right. Maybe if I can stick with my own duties he'll stop heckling me about it. It'll be hard, though.. Whatever. You can help me through it, right?" She looked at him with a smile. "Oh, of course! I'll make sure to help you through it. Remember if you need anything, I'm here for you." Squirrelflight smiled. She knew she could trust this tom.

Chapter Two

[image]

Leafpaw looked at the two cats across the clearing. She regretted telling Brambleclaw what to say. He was standing by Cloudtail, an upset frown across his muzzle. The sun had been setting, and Ashfur and Squirrelflight decided to go out hunting. Leafpaw guessed this was to talk about the situation. Cinderpelt called her into the Medicine Cats' Den, and she padded inside. She spent the rest of the evening sorting herbs, until it was time to head to the Moonpool.

Cinderpelt limped her way up the path to the Moonpool. Mothwing followed them, along with Barkface and Littlecloud. The cats all sat around the Moonpool. "Before we start," Cinderpelt meowed, "I'd like to make Leafpaw a full medicine cat." Leafpool felt the urge to jump up into the sky, despite how tempting it was, she sat still, disbelief still reflecting off her eyes. Cinderpelt began, "I, Cinderpelt, medicine cat of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, and with your help she will serve her Clan for many moons," she paused, "Leafpaw, do you promise to uphold the ways of a medicine cat, to stand apart from rivalry between Clan and Clan and to protect all cats equally, even at the cost of your life?" Leafpaw could hear her heart beating, "I do." Cinderpelt continued, "Then by the powers of I give you your true name as a medicine cat. Leafpaw, from this moment you will be known as Leafpool. StarClan honors your positivity and perserverance, and we welcome you as a full medicine cat of ThunderClan." At this, Leafpool smiled. She was so happy she managed to achieve this. The other medicine cats chanted her name, and after that, they each tapped their nose to the Moonpool.

Leafpool didn't feel the usual chill. She only felt sticky, and gross. She opened her eyes to see a black forest, where large pines seemed to lean against each other under the starless sky. She looked forward to see three cats, a large tabby tom with shades of brown and broad shoulders, who in fact, looked a lot like Brambleclaw, of

course, Brambleclaw, and.. Hawkfrost. She padded toward the cats, crouching behind a bush so she couldn't be seen. "Now, my sons, I would like to tell you exactly what to do. Brambleclaw, you need to tell Firestar you believe you are ready to mentor an apprentice. This will make him give you Berrykit, I'd assume. Hawkfrost, you've already mentored an apprentice, you just need to find some way to get rid of Mistyfoot. Brambleclaw, when you get the apprentice, announce the Clan needs a deputy to Firestar. He'll have to choose you. That kittypet won't even see it coming when you get rid of him." Brambleclaw looked up at his father. "I will, Tigerstar." *So **Tigerstar** was the tom they're talking to..* Leafpool shivered. She didn't want anything to do with these cats, but StarClan must've shown her this for a reason.. Of course, to warn her sister! After Tigerstar went on about how terrible her father was, he had the brothers fight. *How could you follow this tom's ways, even after all of the stories you've heard about him? Even if he was your father..* Maybe Squirrelflight was right about Brambleclaw. She had to tell her.

Leafpool woke up to see dawn filtering through the clouds. Cinderpelt had already been up, and the rest of the medicine cats were waking up. They all seemed quite scared of something. Leafpool took it into consideration that they had seen what she had, but that didn't seem to be the case. Leafpool decided not to worry about it. This was shared with the other medicine cats, not her. It was not StarClan's destiny. At least Mothwing didn't seem to be too scared, but she didn't seem to find any interest in StarClan.. Leafpool put this off as well. That was Mothwing's decision, not her's.

After arriving at the Clan, Leafpool knew what she had to do. Cinderpelt told everyone about the ceremony, and Squirrelflight came up to say her congratulations. "Thank you, Squirrelflight, but there's something I have to tell you.. Er.. In private." Squirrelflight tilted her head, "Alright, I know the place." The two cats went outside camp and to the lake shore. "What is it you want to talk to me about, Leafpool?" Leafpool felt her tail twitching. "Well, when I was at the Moonpool, StarClan decided to show me Brambleclaw.. He was.." Leafpool paused, not knowing how to say this, "He was doing some sort of training thing with Hawkfrost and Tigerstar.." Squirrelflight's eyes widened. "I knew it! He's seemed so off lately..

I'll try and reason with him. If he doesn't fix it, I don't know what to do..." Leafpool nodded. "I'll make sure he won't pull anything."

Chapter Three

[image]

Squirrelflight woke up early the next morning laying next to Ashfur. She looked out of the den, the grayish light of dawn filtering through the bracken that covered the Warriors' Den. She padded out to find Brambleclaw sitting down, blood dripping from his shoulder. He frantically tried to patch it up.

"Brambleclaw? Are you okay?" She asked, worried.

"Yeah.." He grumbled.

"Should I get Leafpool?" Squirrelflight offered.

"No, don't do that!" He said, an edge of panic to his tone.

"Okay.. Listen, there's something I want to say to you..." She looked around, making sure that there were no cats up and around the area. "The thing is.. I.." She decided not to get Leafpool into the situation. "I had a dream, you were seeing your brother, and your father.. Tigerstar.." She hesitated to say the name, "And I was wondering why you were taking what he said into account..."

Brambleclaw's eyes widened. Panic reflected off of them. "What? How could you accuse me of such things? I understand thinking of that, but outright accusing me? This has gone too far! We are never going to go far into this relationship! I don't want to hear about Hawkfrost.. My father.. How could you?"

"I just thought it happened.." Squirrelflight sighed, quietly looking at the broad shouldered tom as he padded out of camp. "I'm going back to sleep.."

She padded back into the den, feeling her eyes begin to water. She saw Ashfur sitting up. "I just woke up.. I heard some muffled shouting, but that's about all.." He got up and padded out of the den.

Squirrelflight followed him. "Oh Ashfur.." She began sobbing into his pelt. The tom curled his tail around her, running it up and down her spine.

"It's okay, I don't want to see you cry.." He sighed, then pricked his ears. "Hey, why don't we go hunting together, we can talk about it, that is, if you want to." Squirrelflight nodded.

The two cats padded outside, side by side. They went to the Ancient Oak to find some squirrels. Ashfur managed to find one crawling up a tree, and run up to it just like the small creature, nipping it's neck and leaping down on all fours.

Squirrelflight smiled. "That was amazing! I should try hunting like that. Maybe that could be the reason I'm called *Squirrel* flight." Ashfur let out a *mrrow* of laughter. It was nice to feel that you've made someone happy. Something, she felt, was impossible with Brambleclaw.

After getting back to camp, she found Leafpool awake.

"Leafpool, he didn't take it well.." She sighed. Leafpool looked at Squirrelflight.

"Well, I wouldn't expect him to. By any chance did he have any wounds this morning?"

Squirrelflight's eyes widened. "Yes, in fact. He did."

"Aha! He was fighting with Hawkfrost last night on Tigerstar's orders! He was encouraging them, saying this is how they would be deputy! Actually.. He was training to fight someone, but I don't know who.."

Squirrelflight stared at her sister in surprise. Brambleclaw really was training with Tigerstar.. Suddenly, a yowl ran around the hollow. "May all cats old enough to catch their own prey, gather under High Ledge for a Clan meeting!" Firestar's voice sounded loud and clear across the camp.

"Today, Daisy's litter of Hazelkit, Mousekit, and Berrykit are old enough to become apprentices." The flame colored tom stated.

"Hazelkit, Mousekit, and Berrykit**,** you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Hazelpaw, Mousepaw, and Berrypaw. Hazelpaw, your mentor will be Cloudtail. Mousepaw, your mentor will be Spiderleg. Berrypaw, your mentor will be..." Squirrelflight could almost feel Brambleclaw as he strained to hear the mentor, "Brambleclaw. I hope these cats pass on all they know to you." *Uh oh.*. Squirrelflight thought nervously. This gave Brambleclaw a chance to become deputy.. She could almost see him killing to rise to power.. She and Leafpool exchanged nervous glances. "Clan dismissed." As Squirrelflight saw Brambleclaw heading for the leader's den, she knew what he was going to say..

Chapter Four

[image]

Brambleclaw felt his claws almost itching. He couldn't wait to talk to his father and Hawkfrost. He would become ThunderClan deputy, but first, he had to ask Firestar. He could already see himself on High Ledge, calling Clan meetings, and then, taking over WindClan territory... He grinned as he padded toward Firestar's den, despite already feeling Squirrelflight's stare. She had nearly found out he was training with his family, but he didn't care. Leafpool is the only cat that would believe her, and she wasn't even the *real* medicine cat! He could feel Tigerstar's breath in his ear. *Yes,* his father told him. *Ask that mangepelt, and if he says no, you can still get rid of him.*.

The tom crawled up the High Ledge to Firestar's den. When he arrived at the entrance, he found Sandstorm and the Clan leader sharing tongues.

"Hello, Firestar," Brambleclaw greeted his leader, dipping his head.

"Good afternoon, Brambleclaw. What is it that you need?" The orange tom asked, tilting his head slightly to the left.

"I was going to request if I could to speak to you alone?" He asked, blinking.

"Oh, of course. Do you mind, Sandstorm?" He looked at the pale molly.

"Not at all, my love," She lapped his ear and padded out of the den, he could hear pebbles drop as she leaped down from the boulders up to Firestar's den.

"So, what is it that you need?" Firestar looked at Brambleclaw expectantly.

"Well, I wanted to say that.. At the last gathering, ThunderClan was

seen as weak, I just thought a way to seem stronger was to.." He could already see Firestar's frown. "I thought that we could make a Clan deputy. Graystripe's not coming back. Even if he found his way back, he wouldn't know where to journey," Brambleclaw stated. *Now all I must do is hope it's me,* he thought.

"Well.." Firestar sighed, "You make I good point. I do suppose it's time we make a deputy.. I need to ask Cinderpelt what she thinks of it. Perhaps she could get Leafpool to try to connect with StarClan and.. See who they want."

Leafpool sat in the Medicine Cats' Den, sorting herbs. Suddenly, she heard few twig snaps behind her, and turned to see her father and Brambleclaw. The tom had a smug look on his face. *Oh no..* Leafpool thought.

"Leafpool? Is Cinderpelt here?" She heart her father's voice, as if it were announcing something. Cinderpelt appeared around the herb storage.

"Yes, I'm here." Her mentor continued to limp out.

"Well... I was wondering.. It's time I made a deputy." Firestar meowed.

"Oh?" Cinderpelt looked surprised.

"Yes," Firestar went on, "I've finally been convinced, but.. I'd like to ask StarClan who to choose."

Cinderpelt nodded, "Well, I believe I've got the perfect cat for the job," She turned to Leafpool, "Leafpool, my apprentice, would you like to do this?"

Leafpool stared at her mentor in surprise, "Oh.. Of course I would like to do this!" Leafpool felt her paws tingle. Her mentor looked at her. "Well, if StarClan thinks it is time for us to have a deputy, they will send Leafpool a dream tonight." She then closed her eyes, as if praying to StarClan that they would send a sign. Leafpool prayed too, except, that Brambleclaw would not be her warrior ancestors' first choice.

That night, Leafpool dreampt. She heard sounds all around her. It was dark. It sounded like millions of spiders, crawling everywhere, from behind her to her sides and in front of her. She fearfully opened her eyes, to see claws everywhere. These weren't any claws, though. They were of bramble. She looked around to see her camp. "StarClan... No.." She whispered. She looked up, to see the shimmering stars, her warrior ancestors' spirits. She leaped up. To her surprise, she began to float.. She floated up to the stars, seeing cats begin to form. She saw Spottedleaf among them. "Spottedleaf, why did you choose him? Surely you know of his deeds?" Spottedleaf shook her head.

"Sometimes, my dear, it is necessary to get rid of a cat, for the sake of getting rid of another."

And at that, Leafpool awoke.

Chapter Five

[image]

Brambleclaw, too, had a dream that night.

"I saw what happened yesterday. You had better hope that StarClan chose you," Tigerstar looked at him, his rough voice serious.

"I know they will, father," Brambleclaw dipped his head, "Who else are they to choose?"

"He has a good point," Hawkfrost's cold voice sounded beside him, "I doubt our warrior ancestors would choose one of those weak flea-brains from ThunderClan. They only choose *real* warriors. Not ones who fall in love with *kittypets*, or even let them in."

Tigerstar looked down at his son. "Well, Hawkfrost, I don't think that you seemed to succeed in becoming deputy." Hawkfrost snarled.

"Now, we should get to the bottom line of this. Brambleclaw, aim at Hawkfrost's back, try and flip him over by biting his neck," Tigerstar looked at his son expectantly.

Brambleclaw nodded, leaping onto his brother. He was bigger than the tom, so it was easy to push him into a crouch. He bit his scruff harshly and turned him over. Tigerstar didn't look impressed, but didn't look unhappy, so he assumed he succeeded.

"Now, my sons, I want you to meet in the real world. Tommorrow at sunset. Brambleclaw, tell Firestar to come down to the shore because a RiverClan cat invaded the territory. Hawkfrost, you guide him to the fox trap. Keep him there until he looses all of his lives. You cannot let him leave. If Brambleclaw is deputy, this will work out perfectly.." The fire in Tigerstars eyes seemed to light up the forest, then, everything seemed to fade..

It was sunhigh, and Brambleclaw was returning from a patrol. He

had caught a few mice and a squirrel. Dropping his prey onto the fresh-kill pile, he heard Firestar's yowl echo across the camp. Squirrelflight was talking with Ashfur. He knew what Ashfur really wanted. He wanted to steal Squirrelflight from him. *You can have her.*. He thought. "May all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather under High Ledge for a Clan meeting!"

Squirrelflight knew what was about to happen. It was the moment of truth. She followed where the rest of the cats were gathering, pelt to pelt with Ashfur. She liked this tom more than she liked Brambleclaw. He was able to support her when she needed it. Maybe she would even consider being mates with him one day, clearly they both felt that they were more than *just* clanmates.

"Today is a special day. We are finally going to make a deputy.." Firestar clearly was thinking of Graystripe. Squirrelflight gave her father a sympathetic glance. "It has been long overdue, and StarClan has agreed as well. I say these words before , so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors and the spirit of Graystripe may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of ThunderClan is..." Squirrelflight squeezed Ashfur's tail with her own. "Brambleclaw. StarClan has decided to make you our deputy. I hope that if I pass on whilst you are deputy, you can bring ThunderClan to glory." Squirrielflight's heart skipped a beat. Brambleclaw was the new deputy.. She couldn't believe this! Why had her warrior ancestors chosen him? Brambleclaw padded up and dipped his head. She could almost see the smug feeling he had, taunting Squirrelflight. What would happen now, that he was deputy? Would he try to kill Firestar, for the sake of rising to power? What if he was the tom Tigerstar was training them to kill. It made sense, he was the only tom to get in the way of TigerClan. All he had to do was kill her father, and then what? Squirrelflight sighed.

"Squirrelflight? Are you okay?" Ashfur was looking at Squirrelflight, concerned. "Oh, yes. It's just, I'm worried something will happen to Firestar, now that we have a new deputy, someone might try and kill for power again and.." Squirrelflight realized she was rambling.

"Squirrelflight?" Ashfur asked.

"Yes, Ashfur?"

"Is there something we need to talk about?" Ashfur looked at her seriously.

"Well.. Yes. You see, Leafpool said that on the night she earned her name she saw Brambleclaw and Hawkfrost training with.." Squirrelflight hesitated to say the name, "Tigerstar." Ashfur's eyes widened, his neck fur rising at the name.

"You could have told me," Ashfur said, "I wouldn't tell a spirit." Squirrelflight sighed. "I know, Leafpool just didn't seem to want anyone to know, so I didn't tell anyone else." Ashfur nodded. "I understand. I should let you have some privacy." Squirrelflight ran her tail up his spine. "It's okay. I feel more relieved when I tell other cats my problems, I just don't want to pass them on, that's all. Thank you for listening."

Chapter Six

[image]

Ashfur padded into camp with bits of prey in his jaws. He looked around camp, seeing Squirrelflight, he padded over.

"Would you like to share a mouse?" He asked.

"Of course!" Squirrelflight purred. The two cats began to eat the mouse.

"You know, I was wondering if you'd like to go hunting, around sunset. It's always beautiful, besides, there's something I'd like to ask you," Ashfur felt his paws tingle. He couldn't wait to hear the answer.

Squirrelflight looked at him and tipped her head, "You know, I believe that I can handle going out tonight. I mean, the earliest I'd be up tomorrow is the dawn patrol."

Ashfur nearly jumped, finishing his share of the mouse, he meowed, "Great! I'll see you tonight."

Squirrelflight yawned, stretching out. She was going to go do some night hunting with Ashfur soon, and couldn't wait for them to be together with no other cats to bother them. She had taken a liking for the tom, and guessed he had felt the same, but she wanted to make sure he did before taking any steps forward in the relationship. She felt her ears grow hot as she spotted the tom.

"Hi, Ashfur. Are you ready to go hunting?" The tom looked at her excitedly, "Of course. Why don't we head to the shore and see the sun set before we start, though?" She nodded. "That would be beautiful." So the two cats padded out out of the hollow. Before leaving she heard Brambleclaw speaking to Firestar, but she couldn't tell what they were saying.

When they arrived at the shore, the sat close, watching the sun set

under the mountains. Squirrelflight wondered what it would be like in the mountains, she had never paid any attention to the sunset. She was too busy squabbling with her teammates. That, or mourning Feathertail...

Ashfur broke the silence, "So, that question I had.. it was.." Ashfur hesitated.

"Yes?" Squirrelflight pressed.

"Well I.. Squirrelflight, I really like you.. I feel like we could be so much more than clanmates, and I was wondering if you felt the same.."

Squirrelflight felt her eyes widen, "Ashfur.. I.. I love you," She meowed, "And I was wondering if you had felt that way, as well." She watched as the anxiety on his face turned to happiness, and he put his tail around her tightly. "I love you too," He meowed.

Suddenly, a terrible shriek off in the distance. "Ashfur, what was that?" Ashfur's eyes seemed to widen as much as her's, his voice shaky, he responded, "I don't know.. We should check it out, I-I mean a cat could be hurt!" The two cats rushed along the shoreline, the scent of blood growing stronger and stronger, and before seeing anything, they saw Brambleclaw and Hawkfrost, looking down at something- no, some*one*.

"Firestar!" Squirrelflight whispered. "What are they doing to him?" Brambleclaw looked at his half brother. "You know, Hawkfrost, I never thought you could do it."

"Hm?" The RiverClan tom responded, tilting his head.

"Be as stupid as to come onto my territory. Nothing can stop me from ruling all of the Clans, and you know it. Surrender now, my brother, or you could be killed."

The tension was undeniable. Hawkfrost stared at his brother.

"No."

Brambleclaw seemed to laugh, and then, faster than a bird takes off

from a tree, he leaped onto his brother, pinning him down. Hawkfrost bit the bottom of Brambleclaw's throat. Brambleclaw coughed, then dug his claws into Hawkfrost's eyes, biting his neck. Hawkfrost's back legs worked into Brambleclaw's belly, blood gushing out of both of the toms.

Suddenly, Ashfur snapped Squirrelflight into reality. "Squirrelflight, we need to save Firestar! We can't let him die!" Squirrelflight realized how many times the tom had gasped for air. *Oh no!* Squirrelflight thought. *He only has one life left!*

Squirrelflight and Ashfur began to frantically dig at the peg holding Firestar down. The flame colored tom had been turned red by his own blood. It released! Firestar had to see the medicine cat..

Except the tom was dead.

Chapter Seven

[image]

Brambleclaw kept fighting. He had to win this. He could gain control of the forest. He could have everything. No cat could stop him. He felt his legs start to hurt, Hawkfrost began to seem to stop moving. The tom under him had been going limp, but he had been too. Brambleclaw felt the sensation crawling up his spine. The gash in his lower belly and throat began to bleed out, even more. He backed up into the lake, falling over. He began to feel very sticky, and knew where he would rein in the afterlife.

"Firestar!" Squirrelflight cried. Her father's body lay there, limp. She couldn't believe this. "Oh, father.." Her body shook with sorrow. "We shall tell the Clan what Brambleclaw has done- he will not be leader, for as long as I live." Ashfur looked at Squirrelflight. "My love, he's dead. He killed them all.." Squirrelflight let out another sorrowful yowl. The two cats carried Firestar's body to camp, leaving Brambleclaw and Hawkfrost's corpses for later.

When the cats came back to the Clan, everyone was asleep, except a few queens tending to their kits. Ashfur let out a yowl, loud enough to wake the Tribe cats from their slumbers. "Cats of ThunderClan, gather around me, for I have a story to share." Most cats coming out of their den seemed annoyed, but when they saw Firestar's corpse, they came rushing over. Many questions echoed off the walls around the hollow. "Silence." Ashfur's tail raised. "Firestar was led and killed in a fox trap multiple times by his own deputy, Brambleclaw," Ashfur's voice shook. Squirrelflight lowered her muzzle into his shoulder, hiding her sounds of sulking.

"What? Why? What happened to his lives?"

"Brambleclaw? I knew it! No son of Tigerstar could do any good!"

"Silence!"

The cats seemed to stop their sounds of surprise.

"Firestar was kept there until he had lost all of his lives. Despite our attempts to free him he was killed. Brambleclaw brought Hawkfrost along to help him out, but managed to kill both of them in order to rule the forest. Squirrelflight and I believe this has something to do with him walking with Tigerstar in his dreams."

Cinderpelt stepped forward. "We need a new leader for now. What if something happens, and there is no cat to lead the Clan?"

Ashfur nodded, "That is why I trust in you to elect the new leader of ThunderClan."

Cinderpelt looked up at the stars, "They will speak through me."

Cinderpelt climbed up onto High Ledge. "May all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather under High Ledge for a Clan Meeting."

Cinderpelt looked at the cats below her. Whispers echoed around the hollow.

"Ashfur, you are a loyal warrior and worthy of becoming leader. I know you will be able to lead ThunderClan to greatness."

Ashfur looked surprised. Squirrelflight nuzzled him and lapped his muzzle. "Congratulations, Ashstar." Ashfur padded up to High Ledge. Cinderpelt padded down.

"Due to the fact that I am now leader I shall gain my nine lives at the Moonpool. I will trust my warriors to watch over the Clan."

Cinderpelt looked at Leafpool, "Leafpool, will you get the traveling herbs ready for tomorrow morning?" She asked. Leafpool dipped her head and padded into the Medicine Cats' Den.

Squirrelflight laid next to Ashfur during the vigil. She didn't leave his side, she soon fell asleep, and realized he had, too, before drifting off.

Chapter Eight

[image]

Ashfur woke up to Cinderpelt tapping his head with her tail. "Ashfur, wake up. We need to leave soon." Ashfur looked at Firestar's corpse, then looked to the elders. "Would you please tell the Clan to give him some final goodbyes, then bury him?" The elders nodded. Ashfur looked upward. It was sunhigh. It was nearly time to leave.

After eating the traveling herbs, Ashfur lapped Squirrelflight between the ears.

"Be safe, okay? I'm sure they'll accept you," She meowed.

Ashfur nodded, "I hope so. I love you, Squirrelflight,"

"I love you, too. Goodbye, Ashfur," She meowed.

"Goodbye." The tom felt like he wasn't just saying goodbye to his Clan, he was saying goodbye to his old lives, and his old role. He felt nervous the entire journey through the territory. "I remember bringing Firestar to the Moonstone when you were an apprentice," Cinderpelt meowed, a wistful sense seemed to fill her tone. "It's a shame he didn't get to live longer.." She sighed.

When they had arrived, the sun was already setting, and Ashfur's paws hurt. "Now," Cinderpelt instructed, "When they speak to you it will be unexpected. Just don't resist them. That's all I'm aloud to say to you," Cinderpelt meowed. Ashfur let out a sigh. "Touch it when you're ready." Ashfur knelt down, letting out a sigh, he touched his nose to the Moonpool.

It was very cold, that was the only way Ashfur could describe it. Cold and dark. Immediately, Ashfur wanted to open his eyes, he felt there was something wrong, but the only thing he had opened his eyes to was a starry field. Many whispers seemed to sound around

him, and those whispers turned into cats. Cats with either faint, starry outlines or somewhere in between those who looked alive and those who looked like they were nearly fading.

One tom padded up, Ashfur recognized his dark gray pelt, his light blue eyes. It was his half brother, Rainwhisker.

The tom tapped his nose to his brother's head, "With this life, I give you acceptance. Use it well when you accept those into your Clan who are not Clanborn." Rainwhisker mouthed a goodbye to his half brother, and a rush of cold went over him, and a loud crash caused much pain on his back. Suddenly, the pain stopped, and another cat stepped up. It was a kit.

The kit struggled to place it's nose on the top of his head, "With this life, I give you faith! Use it to stay faithful to your Squirrelflight!" The kit squeaked excitedly. Soon, the area filled with the warm airs of the nursery, and comforting voices telling him to close his eyes. *This kit must be Elderkit,* Ashfur thought.

The next cat that padded up was a white tom with yellow eyes. *Father!* Ashfur thought. Whitestorm put his nose on the top of his son's head, "With this life, I give you humor. Use it to make light of situations and to entertain your Clan when times are tough."

His mother, Brindleface padded forward, resting her nose on his head, "With this life, I give you love. Use it to find the ways to love others, not just your mate." She stepped back.

Ashfur had gained the rest of his lives, all but one. Firestar stepped up, his orange pelt shimmering with the starlight. He looked like a lion in StarClan, and oh, so much wiser, "I hail you by your new name, Ashstar. Your old life is no more. You have now received the nine lives of a leader, and StarClan grants you the guardianship of ThunderClan. Defend it well; care for young and old; honor your ancestors and the traditions of the ; live each life with pride and dignity."

The cats of StarClan chanted his new name, Ashstar looked around, then felt everything fade away. He woke up to the dawn of the next morning.

"Well, *Ashstar,* how was it?" Ashstar dipped his head. "It was definitely not what I had expected, but it was comforting, seeing those I loved again.."

When they got back to camp, Ashstar realized he had yet another responsibility. He had to name a deputy.

Chapter Nine

[image]

Squirrelflight woke up in the middle of the night. Her paw had been stabbed by a thorn in the bracken of the Warriors' den. She padded to the Medicine Cats' den, no cats sleeping there. *Where is my sister?* She thought. Maybe it could be medicine cat duties.. It was the night Ashstar became leader, though. *Weird.*

"Squirrelflight, wake up! Ashstar is here!" Squirrelflight opened her eyes in an instant. She padded out of her den, and saw her mate. He looked more wise than ever before, she felt like she was so below him...

"Squirrelflight!" Ashstar padded up to her and the two nuzzled, "I'm about to call my first Clan meeting.." Anxiety suddenly lit his expression.

"I'm sure you'll be great," Squirrelflight meowed, lapping his cheek. She looked at him proudly before he leaped up to High Ledge.

"May all cats old enough to catch their own prey, gather under High Rock for a Clan meeting!"

The entire Clan seemed to already be under High Rock, except for Squirrelflight. *Sneaky little foxes!* She thought, padding over.

"As I am leader, I believe it is time that I appoint a deputy," Ashstar scanned the crowd of cats. He seemed to have found the cat he was looking for.

"I say these words before , so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of ThunderClan is Cloudtail." Ashstar looked at the white tom.

Cloudtail's eyes lit up with disbelief.

"Clan dismissed," Ashfur leaped down, looking at his new deputy. "Congratulations," He purred, "I know you'll do well."

Squirrelflight padded up to Ashstar. She still couldn't believe the name. She was so proud. "Ashstar, the gathering is tonight. Who are you going to choose?"
Ashstar thought about it. "I'll take you, leave Cloudtail behind, Thornclaw, Brackenfur, Leafpool... Maybe.. Sorreltail. Will you tell them for me?" Squirrelflight nodded, dipping her head.

"Oh, there's no need for that, I'm your mate!" The tom looked at Squirrelflight, amusement sparkling in his eyes. She stifled a purr and padded to said cats.

The patrol of cats said their goodbyes and padded out of the hollow.

Squirrelflight padded close to Ashfur, his tail entwined with hers. They had been walking for what felt like several foxlengths, and they had made it to the tree bridge.

"Watch your step," Ashstar ordered.

Squirrelflight noticed that RiverClan and ShadowClan had been there. Leafpool padded up behind her, concern glistening in her eyes.

"I hope nothing happened to WindClan.." She murmured.

Squirrelflight let out a huff of amusement, "When were you so worried about WindClan? We have all night, I'm sure they'll make it."

Leafpool sighed. She was concerned about something. Squirrelflight decided it was none of her business. Leafpool hadn't barged in when it came to Brambleclaw unless it was necessary.

After about a hearbeat of waiting, WindClan arrived behind them. Sounds of confusion echoed across the island when the other Clans saw Ashstar on the branch.

"Why is Ashfur up there?"

"Who even *is* Ashfur?"

Clearly the gray tom wasn't as popular in other Clans as he was in her own.

Ashfur cleared his throat. Squirrelflight mouthed some words of encouragement to him before the Gathering had started.

"Cats of all Clans," Leopardstar began, "Welcome to the Gathering."

Blackstar cocked his head towards Ashstar. "Ashfur, I believe you'd like to explain," He growled, "It's not like every cat can sit up here."

Ashstar dipped his head calmly, "Firestar was lead to a fox trap by Brambleclaw and Hawkfrost. In their bickering, Hawkfrost and Brambleclaw had killed each other, while Firestar was killed by their... little plan. I am now Ashstar of ThunderClan."

Leopardstar kept quiet during this speech, while Onestar's eyes widened.

"I never thought one of my warriors would do that to a Clan leader.." Leopardstar murmured.

Squirrelflight looked toward her sister, who had been sitting next to her, but she had moved next to Crowfeather. *You'd think they had hated eachother...* She thought.

Ashstar continued, "Through all of the turmoil, Cloudtail has been named deputy. That is all I must say about ThunderClan."

Chapter Ten

[image]

It had been moons since Ashstar's first gathering. Squirrelflight awoke in the Leader's Den, Ashstar curled around her. She yawned and stretched. She had noticed she had felt a lot of cramping lately. She decided to have Leafpool check it out. She was the only medicine cat, after Cinderpelt had been attacked by a badger looking for herbs. There wasn't much information about the attack, but Squirrelflight had grieved either way.

"Leafpool?" The she-cat looked around for her sister.

"Oh, hi Squirrelflight. What's the problem?" Leafpool looked insanely tired.

"Er.. I've been having a lot of cramping lately, and I'm not sure why."

"Where is it from?" Leafpool tipped her head.

"It's right on the bottom of my belly. I haven't eaten any crowfood and I don't think any would be in the freshkill pile anyways.." Squirrelflight explained.

Leafpool nodded, then paused for a moment, deep in thought. "Ah, I've heard these symptoms in queens before. No ThunderClan warrior gets *that* chunky from eating just prey."

Squirrelflight felt the heat of happiness under her fur. "So does that mean I'm expecting Ashstar's kits?" She could have leaped up to StarClan she was so happy.

"Yes. It does. I'd recommend you tell him before he figures out himself," She mused.

Squirrelflight pawed Ashstar in the side. "Ashstar.." She murmured softly, "I have something to tell you."

"What is it, my dear?" He looked at Squirrelflight, head tipping as he blinked sleep from his eyes.

"I'm expecting your kits.." She whispered.

Ashfur hopped to his paws. "You must move to the nursery immediately! I'll make your nest myself, with feathers and everything!"

Squirrelflight giggled. "I'm sure I can wait? I mean, we have the best medicine cat in the Clan!"

"Nononono! I will go right now!"

By sunhigh, Ashstar came back with the fluffiest moss in the forest, the lightest feathers, and the brightest eyes.

It had been a night in the nursery, and Squirrelflight liked the scent of milk and the warm bedding she'd been given. Her belly had already looked larger, the more she thought about it. She wondered how close to kitting she was.

She padded outside, realizing the panic in her Clanmate's eyes.

"Squirrelflight, do you know where Leafpool went?" Mousepaw padded out of the den, eyes wide with concern. Squirrelflight felt her pelt prickling anxiously.

"I haven't seen her, why?"

"She's been gone all morning.. I don't know what to do.."

Brightheart was in the Medicine Cats' Den, looking around. "I spent so much time healing with these herbs. If she doesn't return by tomorrow I can help keep you healthy."

Daisy padded out of the den, running her tail along Squirrelflight's side comfortingly.

"I'm sure we'll find her soon enough.."

It had been a moon. Squirrelflight was close to kitting, and Leafpool was still gone. None of the warriors in camp thought she would come back, and Brightheart had taken over Medicine cat duties. Brightheart had done well, helping kits with their paws, and everything. A rescue patrol was sent out, and Onestar said during the gathering that Crowfeather was missing as well. Squirrelflight had her suspicions, but if her sister had broken the warrior code and ran off with him.. She had taken a liking to the black tom, and she acted just like Feathertail would have.

Ashstar padded into the den, nuzzling her cheek, "How are the kits, my love? Have you felt any kicking today?"

"I have, I think they're close to being born.." She murmured, pulling her tail around her swollen belly. She let out a gasp as she felt a kick.

"I'm sure they'll be just as beautiful as you," Ashstar purred.

Squirrelflight let out a weak chuckle, before gasping. Ashstar immediately rushed over, covering her face with licks. "I think... my kits... are coming.." Squirrelflight said in between breaths. Ashstar ran out of the den to get Brightheart.

Brightheart was in the nursery within a heartbeat. "How do you feel?"

"I can't... Breathe!"

Brightheart gave her a stick to bite.

"Push on three! One.. Two.. Three!"

It seemed like only a few heart beats later she was curled up with two kits suckling at her belly. Ashstar was watching them squirm, letting out several loud purrs.

"What should we name them?" Squirrelflight asked.

"Well, the red she-kit with the darker flecks should be called

Acornkit.." Ashstar tipped his head, deep in thought.

"We should name the pale gray tom with the white tail Minnowkit," Squirrelflight suggested.

"Yes, that would be perfect," Ashstar purred.

Chapter Eleven

[image]

Acornkit opened her eyes, the feeling of her mother's belly and her brother pushing against her comforting. She lapped at her paw, her neat fur ruffled by the moss in the den. She padded to the entrance of the den, looking for her father. Ashstar sat by the deputy, Cloudtail.
"Where do you think you're going, missy?" Squirrelflight looked at her kit, a dash of teasing in her meow.
"I want to go see Ashstar. He must be talking to Cloudtail about Leafpool. I hope that they find her.." Acornkit mewed.
Squirrelflight's pelt seemed a bit ruffled, the subject was still sensitive, even after four moons..
"I'm sure they'll find her, Acornkit, and hey, don't worry your tail off yet, you're still a kit!"
Minnowkit got up from the back of the den, his fluffy pelt covered in feathers.
Acornkit looked at her brother and tipped her head.
"You look like you slept on a bird!" She meowed.
"What? I do? Uh oh, what if *Ashstar* sees me like this? I'm *doomed*!" He meowed dramatically.
"Shut up, you know how important he is!" She batted his side.
"*Oh*, yes. He's *our* father. If that's not an honor, I don't know what is!"
Acornkit leaped onto her brother and they stumbled around, batting each others' ears and lightly nipping the other kit's neck.
Mousewhisker padded into the den, eyes wide, as if a queen had been hurt from the squealing.
"Is everything okay?" The young warrior asked. Acornkit got up immediately, not wanting to be seen play fighting with her brother.
"Everything is fine, Mousewhisker," Squirrelflight gave her kits an amused glance.
"Thank StarClan," He meowed. Suddenly, his name was called.
"It sounds like you're on dawn patrol," Squirrelflight meowed, "Better go."
Mousewhisker dipped his head and quickly padded out of the den.

"Squirrelflight, can I leave the nursery? It's getting a bit stuffy, and I want to talk to the elders," Acornkit mewed, looking up at her mother.
"Alright, why don't you take your brother with you, too. He seems a bit energized this morning," She purred.
Acornkit looked at her brother sourly. He was flicking bedding all over the place.
"Come on, Minnowkit. We've gotta go see the elders," Acornkit looked at her brother down and up. His pelt was a mess, she didn't know how he could stand it!

After stopping by the fresh-kill pile and getting some squirrels for the elders, the kits arrived at the den.
"We've brought you some fresh-kill," Acornkit mewed.
"It was *her* idea," Minnowkit rolled his eyes.
"Thank you, my dears," Goldenflower lapped both of the kits between their ears.
"Could you tell us a story?" Acornkit asked. Minnowkit rolled his eyes.
"Come on, I want to see Ashstar! He barely has the time to visit us anymore!"
Acornkit sighed as Minnowkit padded out of the den. He could be such a mouse-brain sometimes!

Minnowkit looked around camp for Ashstar. He was *still* speaking with Cloudtail.
"Ashstar! Ashstar!" Minnowkit pawed his father's side, "Do you want to play moss ball with me? Acornkit's being boring with the elders, and-,"
"I'm sorry, Minnowkit, look, I need to help your mother find Leafpool. Maybe we could do it later?" Ashstar looked at his kit. He looked as if he was up all night trying to find a cat he hadn't even met before!
"Fine.." Minnowkit grumbled. Then he had an idea. What if he found Leafpool, and brought her back! Then his father could spend much more time with him than with *Cloudtail*.

Base used in the picture at the top is by Warriors Wiki.

Chapter Twelve

[image]

A/N: Thank you all for 200+ reads! I'm so grateful to have this platform to share my AU on, and I'm so glad that you have read it! Another thing, the picture in the title has a base that was made by Warrior Wiki. Here's a link to the plain bases if you would like to check them out:
https://warriors.fandom.com/wiki/Category:Pixel_blanks

Minnowkit looked around. Cloudtail and Ashstar were chatting with each other, still, and the entrance was left unguarded due to the amount of patrols looking for Leafpool. He quickly padded to the exit of the hollow, taking a final last breath.
He padded outside, listening to the different sounds of water splashing onto the shore, the birds tweeting loudly. He padded towards a faraway, faint scent.

When Minnowkit continued following the trail, straying farther and farther away from camp, he found a strong scent.
This must be the scent marker, he thought. He hesitantly stepped past the scent mark. The scent of a freshly killed rabbit made him jump, he realized he was in WindClan territory!
He ran from the scent, up toward the hills, away from the shore which had led him there. He must've been too far to go back, and Leafpool would never be found!

After traveling many foxlengths up towards the hills, Minnowkit came across another boundary. There was no other scent, and he decided to cross there. Perhaps he could cross over the hills and back into the comforting undergrowth that was his territory..
A mew made him jump. He turned around, seeing a small, fluffy black kit with green eyes gaping at him. She didn't look more than a moon old.
"Holly! What do you think you're doing over there? I told you to stay near the nest!" It sounded like a grown she-cat.
"There's a tom over here!" She squealed. Minnowkit gulped.

"I'm sure it's nothing-" A brown and white tabby appeared, looking stunned.
"Leafpool, is everything okay?" Suddenly, a sleek. very dark gray tom appeared, his blue eyes glistening with worry. That was Leafpool he had seen!
"Crowfeather, could you come over here?" Minnowkit stared at Crowfeather, eyes wide. He crouched, lowering himself to the ground, his fur beginning to bristle. He looked like he was from WindClan.. Maybe he was WindClan! He'd heard Squirrelflight say his name a couple of times.
"Oh, my.. It's a kit... What brings you here?" Crowfeather looked at him, tipping his head. He looked very calm, for a WindClan cat.
"I.. I was.. I'm looking for her!" Minnowkit squeaked, pointing at Leafpool with his tail. Leafpool sighed.
"I knew that this would happen.. Oh, I was their medicine cat, for StarClan's sake!" She flicked her tail around nervously, "I need to go back and tell them our decision, or else they'll just waste their time looking for us.." Minnowkit's head tipped.
"What is your decision?" He asked.
"You'll know when we get there," Leafpool meowed.

Leafpool took the cats across the moor and into the forest. Crowfeather stayed behind to protect Lion, Holly, and Jay.
"So... What's it like out on the hills?" Minnowkit asked. Leafpool didn't answer.
The cats arrived near camp.
"I want you to stay quiet while I speak to them. They won't like this," Leafpool meowed. She ducked under the thorn barrier. Cats instantly stared at her, whatever they were doing was dropped as they froze. Except one cat.
"Leafpool!" Squirrelflight cried, running over to the she-cat. Leafpool looked at her kin only with anxiety. Squirrelflight stopped dead in her tracks.
"Leafpool? You've returned?" Ashstar was now out of his den, eyes wide with joy.
"I wouldn't put it that way," Leafpool meowed. Confused glances were shared around the clearing, "I haven't returned. I want to continue my life with Crowfeather, out in the hills. We have three kits, and I would love him for my life. I cannot return," Gasps echoed across the walls, Minnowkit's included.

"I didn't know that you.." Squirrelflight looked at her sister, her tone full of sorrow.
Ashstar leaped down from his den, looking at the she-cat.
"I can't change your decision. I hope that you will experience the life of a loner to the fullest.. May StarClan light you path, if your beliefs still lie in those ways," Ashstar dipped his head.
Leafpool and Squirrelflight said their goodbyes, and the deed had been done..
"Minnowkit!" Ashstar's voice suddenly thundered throughout the hollow, "You brought Squirrelflight back. I can't help but believe that you have got something to do with this."
Squirrelflight turned to Minnowkit. Acornkit looked at her brother. Foxkit and Icekit let out small squeals, audible from the nursery.
"I didn't think that she'd say that.." He meowed quietly.
"No. I know you didn't, but clearly the stars lead your paws to find her. I believe that this could be a sign from StarClan! Yes, you will be the new medicine cat! Trained by StarClan themselves!"

Chapter Thirteen

[image]

Minnowkit woke up near his sister at his mother's belly. It had been three more moons, and it was time for his apprentice ceremony. Acornkit was jumpy, not knowing who her mentor would be, but Minnowkit knew exactly who his own would be.

Minnowkit offered to play fight with Acornkit, but she only licked her fur and shook her head, mewing, "I'm too old for that." Minnowkit tipped his head, she'd never said that. Then he noted how Foxkit had been near her.
"Someone's got a sweetheart," He mumbled. Acornkit squealed at him in denial as he giggled.
Suddenly, he looked up to see his father standing on Highledge.
"May all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather under Highledge for a Clan meeting!" Ashstar called from the crumbling den, "Today we have two new apprentices. Minnowkit, Acornkit, step forth!"
Minnowkit stepped forward, clumsily tripping over his own paws, and Acornkit stepped up neatly, lapping her paw and pulling it over her ear.
"Minnowkit, Acornkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Minnowpaw and Acornpaw. Acornpaw, your mentor will be Cloudtail. I hope Cloudtail passes all he knows onto you,"
Ashstar turned to Cloudtail, "Cloudtail, you are ready to take on an apprentice. You have received excellent training from Firestar, and you have shown yourself to be encouraging and optimistic. You will be the mentor of Acornpaw, and I expect you to pass on all you know to her."
Ashstar looked at Minnowpaw, "Minnowpaw, your mentor will be Brightheart. She will teach you to be our medicine cat, due to her knowledge in the subject. When you have completed your training she will be aloud to continue her warrior duties."
Brightheart dipped her head.

Minnopaw padded over to the white and ginger she-cat, pressing his nose to her own.
Acornpaw did the same with Cloudtail.
"Acornpaw! Minnowpaw! Acornpaw! Minnowpaw!"
Ashstar gazed at his kits proudly. Minnowpaw looked at Brightheart again. Perhaps he could learn if she could teach him well...

"What does Juniper do again?" Brightheart asked.
"Juniper soothes bellyaches, gives strength, and helps troubled breathing. It's also used to help calm cats," Minnowpaw answered.
"Good. Where does it grow?"
"Dry places,"
"What do they look like?"
"Purple, kind of blue. They grow on the spiky bush," Minnowpaw took a breath. He hadn't been used to such hardcore training. Acornpaw was out exploring the territory with Cloudtail, and he was stuck here learning the exact usage of all of the herbs you could think of. Brightheart had gotten him to memorize them, for sure.
Foxkit came over, limping. He hissed as his front paw touched the ground, "I have a thorn in my paw, and Ferncloud can't get it out," He meowed, shaking his paw.
"Well, don't try to, it'll make it worse-" Minnowpaw realized he had meowed the exact quote that Brightheart had told him about thorns.
"Why don't you try to pull it out, Minnowpaw? It could be great practice," Brightheart asked him. Minnowpaw tried to hide it, but he was excited to show off this new skill of his. He had to admit it, actually doing the stuff was fun. Memorizing, not so much.
Minnowpaw crouched down, examining the paw. He took the thorn in his jaws, giving it a good tug. A *very* hard tug. Foxkit flinched, but the thorn had been laying on the floor.
"Try not to pull so hard," Brightheart looked at Foxkit's paw as if it were her own.
"Sorry.." Minnowpaw's tail lowered. Brightheart seemed to ignore this.
"What's the next step?" She asked. Minnowpaw went for the goldenrod, chewing it up, he put it onto the kit's paw.
"You should stay off it for a while, and for StarClan's sake, stay away from that bush! You kits always get thorns there.." Minnowpaw began to ramble.

"You sound like you're an elder already!" Foxkit meowed, "You're only a moon older than I, you know?" Minnowpaw ignored the kit, turning to Brightheart as Foxkit padded out.
"You did well," She meowed, "You *already* sound like a medicine cat!" She let out a *mrrow* of laughter. Minnowpaw rolled his eyes. Pawsteps in the thorn tunnel indicated that Cloudtail's patrol was back. Acornpaw came up to him.
"How was the patrol?" He asked.
"It was sooooo great! I caught my first mouse and Cloudtail taught me how to crouch, and-" Acornpaw cleared her throat, "It was interesting." Minnowpaw rolled his eyes.
"How was your training, Minnowpaw?" She asked.
Minnowpaw sighed, "I learned herbs, but I did get a thorn out of *Foxkit's* paw," He made sure to put extra emphasis on the name.
"Shut up, I'm an apprentice now!" Acornpaw cuffed him over the ear with a paw, claws sheathed.
"Yeah right, you love him as much as Ferncloud, and that's saying something!" Acornpaw just growled and padded away.

Minnowpaw awoke to Brightheart tapping him on the side excitedly. "What is it?" He growled.
"Tonight's your first half moon meeting!" Brightheart meowed, "I'll be turning you into a medicine cat apprentice!" Minnowpaw, less drowsy due to the news, got up, shaking his fur. The two cats padded out of the tunnel, on their way to the Moonpool.

Minnowpaw saw Willowpaw and Mothwing first. Soon Barkface arrived, then finally Littlecloud.
"Leafpool's still missing?" Littlecloud asked. Brightheart sighed.
"She isn't exactly missing.. More on it at the Gathering, I promise."
Willowpaw padded over to Minnowpaw.
"Hi! I'm Willowpaw. I'm sure Brightheart told you about me already. I was made an apprentice about a moon ago," She flicked her ear.
"I'm Minnowpaw. I was made an apprentice a sunrise ago," Minnowpaw felt his paw sink into something, "Gah!" Looking down, he saw it was a pawstep. It seemed ancient.
"Oh, yeah. Those are some pawsteps from a while ago. Engraved in the stone for moons before we came here," Willowpaw mewed.
Minnowpaw looked ahead. The others were way ahead. He could faintly hear them talking about himself, the new medicine cat

apprentice. *Horray,* Minnowpaw thought sarcastically.

"We're here," Barkface meowed to the chatting apprentices.
Minnowpaw looked up, eyes widening. The Moonpool was glorious. It was blue in the moonlight, sparkling, as if stars were inside of it. Water poured down from it, making a stream that marked WindClan and ThunderClan's border.
"First," Brightheart meowed, "I'd like to have one of you make Minnowpaw a medicine cat apprentice. I'm not qualified for it, as I haven't gone through the training myself."
Barkface stepped forward. He looked at Brightheart, almost to confirm it. She nodded.
"Minnowpaw, is it your wish to enter the mysteries of StarClan as a medicine cat?"
"It is," Minnowpaw's paws tingled with a mix of excitement and anxiety. This is his destiny.
"Then come forward," Barkface looked at the apprentice, he was about half a tail length taller than him. Minnowpaw let out a deep breath, stepping forward.
"Warriors of StarClan, I present you with this apprentice. They chosen the path of a medicine cat. Grant them your wisdom and insight so that they may understand your ways and heal their Clan in accordance with your will," Barkface finished by flicking his tail toward the Moonpool. Brightheart padded to the side to dream on her own, and the medicine cats gathered around, each taking a sip when the cat beside them had began to dream.
"It's fine," Willowpaw reassured him before it was his turn, "Just stay calm."
Minnowpaw was the last cat left. He crouched down, lapping up the cold, crisp water from the starry pool, and drifted off into darkness.

Minnowpaw had been sitting there for several heartbeats, waiting for StarClan to come for him, but nothing had happened. He gave up, maybe this wasn't his destiny, but when he opened his eyes, he found himself in a sunny field, several cats sitting down around a lake that was before him. One of them, a dark gray shecat with a flat face padded over to him.
"Minnowpaw, greetings. I am Yellowfang. I have come to teach you what Brightheart can't,"

Minnowpaw tipped his head, but Yellowfang continued, "I will teach you how to speak with StarClan. What omens and prophecies are, and how and when to mention them."
Minnowpaw's eyes widened, "You're going to walk with *me?* I don't believe it.."
Yellowfang shook her head, "We'll start with omens and prophecies. Tell me the differences." Minnowpaw hesitated. What were those again? Brightheart hadn't told him.
"They appear in your dreams?" Minnowpaw took his best bet. He'd heard about the great Firestar and his prophecy.
"Not exactly. They are ways to warn the Clans of the future, whether it be good or bad. The difference is that omens usually come in a physical form, while prophecies, like you said, either come in your dreams, which you will share here, or StarClan will show you through a vision."
Yellowfang looked up, as if to tell the time.
"That's all I can teach you tonight. I expect that you work well with Brightheart, even if she's not a medicine cat." With that, everything faded away.

Chapter Fourteen

[image]

Acornpaw woke up to see her brother helping Icekit get a bramble out of the new play area that the kits were setting up for Daisy's new litter. One of the kits were a striped tom with amber eyes, broad shoulders, and long claws. Her parents seemed disturbed by the kit, but Acornpaw knew she had to accept every cat in her Clan evenly, unless they had broken the warrior code by intention. The next kit was a tom with heavy, thick-furred black-and-white tom with a black-and-white tail. The next was a lithe dark cream she-kit. Their names were Frondkit, Toadkit, and Rosekit. Minnowpaw had helped Daisy kit them. *No, not Daisy, Daisyheart*, she thought. The queen had gotten a warrior's name after having her second litter.
"Acornpaw, hurry up! Patrols are starting and we're heading to the ShadowClan border!" Cloudtail's shout made her snap out of her thoughts. She padded over and waited for the rest of the cats to get there.

"What's this? Expanded borders?" Thornclaw was sniffing at the freshly made ShadowClan scent, "Or do they just not have any control over their warriors?" Acornpaw sensed cats nearby. They had been invading the territory. Following the scent trail, she found it lead to a bush. The bush wiggled, and three kits leaped out.
"ThunderClan warrior! Get out of our camp!" The tomkit with a ginger pelt had had shrieked leaped onto the tomkit with a brown tabby pelt that looked rather similar to Frondkit. A cream furred kit padded out.
"I'll protect the nursery, Tigerkit! You hold off that Flamekit ThunderClan warrior until I get the kits away from camp!"
"Okay, Dawnkit! Hurry!" Tigerkit exclaimed, before seeing the looming shadows above him.
"*What* do you think *you're* doing here?" Brackenfur scolded the kits.
"What's that sound? TIGERKIT! IT'S HIM!" Suddenly, a tortoiseshell shecat with green eyes exploded from the pine forest across from them, two cats at her flanks.

"Tawnypelt, these are YOUR kits? What are they doing here?" Thornclaw hissed, back starting to arch.
Tawnypelt looked at the tom, "I'm sorry, they got away from camp somehow and I didn't think that they'd be here of all places," Turning to her kits, she glared, "What if the Clan leader had been here? ShadowClan might've gone to war because of you three!" Brackenfur held up his tail, showing the patrol onward as Tawnypelt continued to scold her kits, with the three other warriors awkwardly watching.

As the cats brought in their prey from the patrol (three squirrels and four mice), Acornpaw noticed Ashstar padding up the Highledge.
"May all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather around Highledge for a Clan meeting!" He yelled. Cats gathered around him.
"Today we have two new kits becoming apprentices," Ashstar went into the ceremony.

Foxpaw was mentored to Squirrelflight, and Icepaw was to Icewing. Acornpaw padded up to the tom.
"Congratulations! Maybe we could train together some time!" She purred. Foxpaw was barely an apprentice, and he was already taller than her.
"Great idea, Acornpaw. Maybe you could help show him around the forest," Squirrelflight and Cloudtail were standing next to the two.
"I'd like that!" Said Foxpaw.
"I guess we could do that. What about Icepaw?" Squirrelflight asked.
"She wants to stay in camp her first day '*cleaning up the elders den, and being helpful n' stuff,*" Foxpaw mocked his sister's tone.
Acornpaw giggled, but her mother shot her a look.
"Alright, then. I suppose we should go," Cloudtail pointed his tail toward the thorn tunnel, and the cats got ready to depart.

"Over here is the WindClan border, and that's the stream that leads up to Moonpool," Acornpaw meowed.
"I guess you could call it the stream to StarClan," He meowed.
"Haha, I guess so!" Acornpaw leaned in close to the tom.
"Acornpaw, quit flirting!" Squirrelflight meowed from behind her.
"Great StarClan, I'm just hanging out with Foxpaw!" She scoffed.

Foxpaw giggled. Cloudtail looked amused, while Squirrelflight gave her a mischievous glance.

When they were back at camp, Acornpaw helped Foxpaw set up his nest (which was next to her own), and she taught him the basics about hunting moves. Foxpaw and she passed a moss ball to each other with their tails behind the other warriors' backs. When it was finally time to sleep, Acornpaw and Foxpaw shared a squirrel and fell asleep.

Minnowpaw turned, seeing something behind him. Dark fog had swallowed the camp, and he couldn't see any color.
Yellowfang appeared, her eyes wide with fear, "Minnowpaw! He returned! You can't let him destroy the forest! He'll kill us all!"
Yellowfang ran out of the camp.
"The past has returned with a thirst for blood. Only one will save us all," The hollows rang with the eerie tune of StarClan cats' voices, and with that, everything was gone.

"Minnowpaw, are you okay?" A pale ginger shecat with a nasty gash on her face appeared above him.
"I'm fine Brightheart. I just had a nightmare," Minnowpaw's neckfur was still bristling, and his muscles were tense.
"Good, because we need to help Leafpool."

Chapter Fifteen

[image]

A/N: Holy crap! 2k reads?! You guys are awesome, thank you so much. I know I haven't written lately, but we'll fix that.

Minnowpaw's head tipped, "Leafpool? Why are we helping her, she's not part of the Clan, she even said so when she came here."
Brightheart put her tail over his muzzle, "It's a secret. Squirrelflight's saw her on the border. Her kits are all sick with Greencough, and they don't have Catmint on their side of the moor. We need to get her some, maybe stay with her for a bit. I'm sure Ashstar will understand if we end up spending the night away.."
"What? Are you sure?"
"Yes, now hurry up, I've already gotten you some traveling herbs. They're by the herb store," Brightheart pointed with her tail to the crack in the den as Minnowpaw realized that herbs were placed neatly under it. Minnowpaw padded over to them and quickly lapped them up, chewing the sour herbs quickly.
"Come on, we've got to get to the old twoleg nest before sunhigh!"

As the cats padded out of camp, Minnowpaw saw the faint gray of dawn shining through the leaves of the trees above the forest. They were nearing the ShadowClan scent marks, then they'd have to go all the way across the territory to WindClan. Minnowpaw felt his pads already feeling sore after the long day's walk.
"We're here," Brightheart meowed, "Chew it by the stem so we can keep the leaves."
Minnowpaw obeyed Brightheart's orders, careful not to chew the leaves of any of the herbs. He had to force himself not to roll all over the sweet smelling purple flowers. Brightheart got cobwebs from nearby bushes and wrapped them around the herbs so they wouldn't be ruined in her jaws. Minnowpaw did the same.
"Now we just need to get to the stream by the moor..." Brightheart mumured. Minnowpaw sighed, picking up the herbs. He began to pad along with her as they headed in the opposite direction of the

ShadowClan border.

"Now, what's the use of Borage?" Brightheart asked.
"To help queens nurse.." Minnowpaw muttered. They had been practicing herbs the entire walk, and they were only half way.
"Can we talk about something else?" Minnowpaw asked.
"No, unless you would like to tell me what you were muttering last night," Brightheart meowed.
"What? What did I say? What did you hear?"
"Oh, you know... Just the usual, 'the past has returned with a thirst for blood, only one will save us all'. Nothing special," Brightheart meowed.
"I didn't know that I spoke in my sleep, I'm sorry you heard that Brightheart, it's just that StarClan hasn't taught me much about-" Minnowpaw remembered his lessons with Yellowfang were a *secret. You don't tell anyone what you've seen until you can make sense of it,* Yellowfang's voice rang in his head.
Brightheart tipped her head, "StarClan?"
"Sorry, I mean you. I just thought the dream might've been from StarClan, but it actually ended."
Brightheart shrugged, "Alright, now, lead the way to Leafpool's nest."

Minnowpaw's shoulders and paws ached when they got to the hills of the moor. A burrow lay hidden under a small mound, almost like a mini hill.
"Leafpool? Crowfeather?" Kits let out hoarse mews.
"Oh, hello Brightheart.." Leafpool's cheekbones were showing and Crowfeather looked more tired than any warrior Minnowpaw had seen. Everything smelled sickly,
"Thank StarClan you're here. I don't know what I could have done without this.." Leafpool looked at the stems, "Hold on.." She dug a whole where a stream was, then covered it so it made a small pool. She then put the stem in, "If I remember right, it'll grow roots after a few days, and it can grow. I'm not sure if it's enough catmint.."
"I can get more-"
"No. I just... I want you to bring them to your Clan."

The Final Part (Ever...)

Hello! I realize that this fanfiction has become quite popular among WattPad readers like myself. Though I know this, I have decided to stop this story entirely. I lost motivation writing it a long time ago, and I've since then moved on to a new fic. The Code of TigerClan. I figured that since you guys will never see the end of this fanfiction, you all deserve a Q&A about what happened to the Clan cats and such in the comments below. I'll revisit this and answer questions as frequently as possible, and soon there will be an FAQ in this section. With all love,

Gaporius.